



**Kennedy-Lugar
Youth Exchange
and Study
(K-L YES)**

*a program of
U.S. Department of State*

Say **YES**
Live & Study in the
United States of
America
Be a Youth Ambassador



ACADEMIC YEAR 2017-2018

**PRELIMINARY
APPLICATION
GUIDELINES**



Call: (880) 1718 208 668
Email: yesinfo@iearnbd.org, Visit: www.iearnbd.org
Address: Kha-44, Shahjadpur, Bashtola, Gulshan,
Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

Dhaka Embassy Website: dhaka.usembassy.gov

Program Website: www.yesprograms.org

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



Edward M. Kennedy

K-L YES program is a high school exchange program of U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The program enables Bangladeshi high school students to spend one academic year at an American high school. Students live with host families, attend classes, learn about American society and values, acquire leadership skills, participate in community service activities, and help Americans to learn about Bangladesh's culture. K-L YES students develop relationships with their American peers.

The Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) was established in 2002. The program was named on Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Senator Richard Lugar because of their vision for building bridges



Richard Lugar

between Americans and young people of other countries based on mutual interests and respect for one another as individuals, while dismissing assumptions and stereotypes based solely on an individual's nationality or ethnic origin.

Currently K-L YES program has more than 9,500 alumni from more than 40 countries. The program has started in Bangladesh on 2004, since then, 335 Bangladeshi students participated in YES program and 286 of them are now affiliated with YES Alumni Association.

International Education and Resource Network - Bangladesh (iEARN-BD) implements the YES program in Bangladesh with the support of U.S. Embassy-Dhaka.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Eligible applicants must:

- » Be Bangladeshi citizens and **not** dual citizens or permanent residents of the U.S, or any other country.
- » Be 15-17 years old on 1 August 2017. Have a date of birth between August 1, 2000 and August, 1, 2002.
- » Be currently enrolled in grade 8, 9, 10 or 11 in high schools and colleges of Bangladesh. Bangladeshi citizens studying in foreign countries are not eligible to apply.
- » Have an equivalent of B-Grade average or better without failing grades in current and last two academic years.
- » Demonstrate sufficient English language ability to speak and to study in English.
- » Meet the U.S. visa eligibility requirements.
- » Not have applied for U.S. immigration through family or relatives.

In addition, students' health records will be reviewed by a U.S. medical team to ensure that they are sufficiently healthy to participate in the program.

SELECTION PROCESS

DEADLINE: 24 NOVEMBER 2016

STEP:1 PRELIMINARY APPLICATION

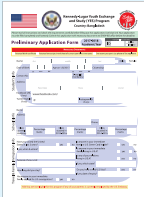
Check if you meet the eligibility criteria.

» Apply for the program online. Go to www.earnbd.org (recommended)

» Send the required documents by post to iEARN-BD office. **OR**

» Collect Preliminary Application Form from your school/college or iEARN-BD office or download from www.earnbd.org.

» Submit the completed form with necessary documents by post or in-person to iEARN-BD office.



STEP:2 PHONE INTERVIEW

» After the preliminary application screening, short listed candidates will be invited for a phone interview. The interview will be 3 minutes long and it is designed to test applicants on general knowledge. The details will of the interview will be sent out only to the shortlisted applicants.



STEP:3 ELTiS TEST & IN CLASS ESSAY

» Short listed candidates from essay submission will sit for ELTiS test & In Class Essay:

» **About ELTiS test:** ELTiS stands for English Language Test for International Students. There are two parts in the test; Reading (45 minutes) and Listening (25 minutes).

» **About In-Class Essay:** Students will have to write 3 essays during the test. They will get 20 minutes to complete each essay.



STEP:4 FINAL APPLICATION & INTERVIEW

» Qualified students in the ELTiS test & In-Class Essay will submit the final application. Students will be informed about the final application process if they qualify.

» Students who will submit the final application will be called for interview. There are two parts in the interview; individual and group.



The selection process will be completed within January 2017.

After interview (Step-4), list of finalists and alternates will be announced from Washington D.C., USA. Selected students will be notified and will have to attend Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) and Travel Orientation before travelling to USA.

SCHOLARS' STORIES

Some stories from our scholars of 2015-2016 Batch



Targiv Sanan Roham

The day I stepped into America, was the first day of the rest of my life. In a short span of only ten

months, I have met people from over 20 countries, been to 6 states, carved a pumpkin, eaten a thanksgiving turkey, decorated a Christmas tree, cooked on a barbecue grill, seen cars from the 1920's, served the community for over 400 hours, been to a Dallas Cowboys game, presented my country to over a thousand people in total, eaten a 42" pizza, learned surfing and hula dancing, met a cowboy, been to a church, played football, laser-tag and ultimate Frisbee, solved a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle, been on plane for over 10 hours, seen a musket being fired and lived in a different country all for the first time in my life. Everyone has remarkable memories in their life but, I assure you, not as many as us YES scholars. We are a privileged bunch of kids. We cherish our memories but also look back at how it has changed us. We have surely grown, adapted, learned and found ourselves in places we had never thought we would.



Jarín Raisa

Exchange is not just a year in my life, but my life in a year. I am lucky to discover the authentic meaning of exchange. K-L YES Program

gave me opportunities to exchange love, respect, mutual understanding and cultural values between Bangladesh and other nations. It changed my perspective in a positive way, by teaching me to respect all human beings. Even if mankind has cultural differences, from an objective view all the differences fade away. During my exchange year in America I missed Bangladesh very much, but it made me stronger. I learned to be a true diplomat who was proudly representing her country. In future, I dream to be an actual diplomat and represent my beloved Bangladesh in UN. My exchange year was a huge inspiration for fulfilling my aim in life.



Tania Rahman

"YES, I am the same person I used to be. Nobody noticed any changes in

me at the end of my exchange year other than gaining weight. How much my perspective and mentality has changed is beyond imagination of anyone. Before K-L YES, after looking at the world map, I used to see only Bangladesh as my own surface. Now my eyes go everywhere in the map. Now, I am a global citizen. While I was in the USA, I spent hundreds of hours in the Microsoft Lab with my Robotics Team/family X bot, and I went to watch famous Broadway musicals. I visited Hollywood, Grand Canyon, Bryce & Zion Canyon and so on. I will use these skills and knowledge gained through K-L YES and my exchange year, to make Mother Earth a better place for all of us."



Towhidul Aziz

You are only one decision away from a totally different life, and life begins at the end of your comfort zone. Going

to a foreign country and living amongst strangers was out of my comfort zone. Now I have a family and friends in that foreign country. An adventure means not knowing what to expect next, and that is what K-L YES is. K-L YES taught me to show tolerance, be open minded, and embrace whatever comes in life with open arms. It was a whole another life in a year!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the cost of the Program?

The U.S. Department of State sponsors the whole program and covers all major expenses including airfare, U.S. visa fee, boarding and lodging in the United States, school tuition and monthly stipend of \$125. Candidates will not bear any costs.

2. Is there any flexibility in age?

No, applicants must be at least 15 years old and no more than 17 years on 1 August 2017.

3. Can I apply and then withdraw at any stage from the program?

Yes, but it is highly discouraged because only a definite amount of scholars are selected and the selection is a costly process. Only apply if you are seriously intending to participate in the program from the very beginning and have your family's consent. It adds to our cost if an applicant applies just for "CHECKING OUT".

4. I am not a Bangladeshi national, am I qualified to apply?

No, the program participation is only for Bangladeshi nationals bearing a Bangladeshi passport.

5. Where the students will live in the USA?

The students will live with a host family who volunteer to host exchange students and are not paid. It can be any state and students are spread across the country with the help of placement organizations. These organizations are approved by Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Bureau of the U.S. Department of State.

6. What are host families?

Average American families - usually from suburban settings - who are willing to host exchange students for a year are very carefully chosen not only to take care of the exchange students like one of their own, but also to expose them to the American lifestyle by encouraging total participation in the family. These families give special importance to try and make the exchange students' year in the U.S. very memorable by organizing activities for them and giving them the opportunity to participate in events that average American teenagers participate in. The host families receive no monetary profit from hosting the exchange students, but they gain the company of the foreign exchange students who expose them to their own culture and values. That is what inspires them to host in the first place.

7. Where do host families come from?

The host families are as ethnically diverse as the population of the U.S. While English must be the first language spoken in the home, this does not preclude the fact that many families are from varied ethnic backgrounds, i.e. African-Americans, Asian-Americans, European-Americans and Hispanic-Americans. The percentage of white, Anglo-Saxon families grows smaller and smaller each year. Students should be mentally prepared for, and be open to the idea of being placed with host families from any type of ethnic and cultural background.

In addition, families of all religious backgrounds can be found in every American community. Most American families attend church and identify themselves with a particular religion. A Host family can be of any faith or religion that is represented in the demographics of the U.S., which includes, but is not limited to: Catholics, Jews, Mormons, Protestants, Baptists etc. However, Community Representatives ensure that female Bangladeshi students are not placed in families where there are boys over 13 years of age. The girls will also be exempted from all activities, sports etc. that require them to wear clothes that show the body and are against Islamic and Bangladeshi values.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

8. How are the hosts selected?

The Placement Organizations select the host families, matching them with students of common interests. The potential host families are found through community service organizations, churches, athletic leagues, youth groups, foreign language classes, malls, county and state fairs, advertising, etc.

9. What will be my status at the host family?

A student will develop various relationships during the ten months of his/her stay in the US on the YES program. The relationship of the student with the host family is at the heart of the cultural exchange and is likely to be the most important part of the year. The placement organization staff makes every effort to place students with families that will complement their students' personality and interests. All YES students need to possess a strong desire to be part of an American family and the willingness to accept distinct responsibilities in their new family. These responsibilities may include (for both boys and girls) helping with household chores such as cooking, washing dishes, laundry, and cleaning and abiding by all family rules, even if they differ from their natural family rules in Bangladesh. Having household support staff is extremely unusual in the U.S., therefore, all household chores are done by members of the family. Please note that American families and the American society in general, treat males and females equally; it is important to learn cultural and family norms and abide by them. The student must exhibit flexibility, tactfulness, politeness and maturity of character. YES students who expect to be treated like guests or be given special treatment in their American families are unlikely to excel in the program.

10. Can I live/visit with my relatives, home country friends who live in the U.S.?

No, students are not allowed to be hosted by their relatives in the USA, nor can they demand to be placed with relatives. Such visits are strongly discouraged during the program year, especially during the initial adjustment period, as they can interrupt the continuity of the relationship buildup with the host family and may diminish the exchange experience for the student and the host family. Any unauthorized visit will result in dismissal from the program.

11. Can you ensure I live with a Muslim or a Bangladeshi family?

No, the program aims to teach people about religious and cultural tolerance. So, a scholar cannot demand a Muslim or a family of the same ethnicity.

12. Can I pray and fast during the exchange in the U.S.?

Yes, you can pray, fast during Ramadan and practice your religion. American law guarantees freedom of religion, and American families in the past have cooperated closely with students to practice their religion.

13. Can I wear headscarf (Hijab) while in the U.S. and in U.S. School?

Yes, all female students can continue to wear their headscarves in schools, in the family, and whenever or wherever they choose to wear it. There are several American Muslims who do wear Hijab in accordance with the faith.

14. Can I get Halal food?

Halal food can be purchased from the Halal food shops in the community or ordered by mail; however, no student can demand it from the host parents, if they cannot afford to spend money in addition to the regular grocery expenses. Students can buy Halal food from their own pocket money and should be willing to cook their meals. Host families are not always expected to provide Halal food for a student.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

16. Do I miss a school year in Bangladesh?

It depends on the institution, the education system you are from and what grade you complete in the United States. For many of the cases, it's a NO but it is possible that you might repeat a year in Bangladesh. Upon your return you can get an equivalence certificate for that grade from the Education Board of Bangladesh to get admitted in University or other institutions.

17. What are my immunization requirements?

Immunization records are very important for every scholars. Other than some common immunization requirements, special vaccinations may be needed to be administered, depending on the host state's requirement. Students also need to pass the TB skin test for attending the program.

18. Can I stay in the United States after the program end date?

It is impossible for a scholar to stay after the end of the program. It is against the program rules and anyone breaking the rule will be a federal offender. He or she will never be able to get a visa for United States.

19. Is there any requirement for J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa?

YES. Students go to USA with J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa. It has a two-year homestay requirement that prohibits students from emigrating to the U.S. or receiving a U.S. work visa.

YES STATISTICS

YES Batch	Number of Applicants	Selected Students	Successful Completion	Acceptance Rate	Program Completion Rate
YES-2 (2004/2005)	150	11	9	6%	82%
YES-3 (2005/2006)	170	17	15	9%	88%
YES-4 (2006/2007)	120	18	18	15%	100%
YES-5 (2007/2008)	117	30	29	25%	97%
YES-6 (2008/2009)	271	30	28	10%	93%
YES-7 (2009/2010)	314	28	26	8%	93%
YES-8 (2010/2011)	293	32	29	10%	91%
YES-9 (2011/2012)	354	23	22	6%	96%
YES-10 (2012/2013)	161	30	30	19%	100%
YES-11 (2013/2014)	475	29	29	6%	100%
YES-12 (2014/2015)	441	29	26	6%	90%
YES-13 (2015/2016)	424	29	28	7%	97%
YES-14 (2016/2017)	357	29	Currently in program	8%	-
Total: 13 batches	3647	335			